

Get a Boost from your Juice

While antioxidants have recently become a hot topic of discussion, many people don't quite know what an antioxidant is and how the help people look and feel their best. As Corey Nappa, wellness advisor and owner of Ten Spa, with locations in West Roxbury and Natick, explains the effects of antioxidants, "If you were to cut an apple in half, leaving one half exposed to the air, and put the other half in lemon juice, the one in lemon juice would be preserved from oxidation. The spread of oxidation leads to free radicals, which decrease immune system strength."

"Tobacco smoke, radiation from the sun, and oxygen are all contributors to oxidation and free radical production in our cells," explains Dr. Judith Mabel, nutritionist of Nutrition Boston in Brookline, citing some environmental factors which lead to oxidation. Corey and Dr. Mabel agree that oxidation of cells is what strongly encourages the aging process. According to the National Cancer Institute, the power of antioxidants lies in their ability to counteract the effects of free radicals by slowing down the rate by which cells oxidize and making them more stable so they age at a slower rate.

Believe it or not, every day we consume beverages which contain antioxidants, like tea

and coffee, as well as various juices. Vitamins A, C, E, as well as lycopene, polyphenols, and beta-carotene are all examples of antioxidants. When it comes to consuming antioxidant-rich foods, Dr. Mabel recommends increasing your intake of vegetables like green peppers, kale, red kidney beans, pinto beans, cooked artichokes, spinach and fresh nuts. When thinking about drinking, she recommends that people look for beverages that contain açai berries, pomegranates, blueberries, cranberries, blackberries, and apples. She is also a fan of chocolate for its antioxidant properties.

Corey recommends supplementing your diet with antioxidant rich foods and fruit juices from natural sources, such as goji berry, pomegranate, and açai berry. Corey highly recommended the pomegranate juice and beverages from POM Wonderful, saying that the company makes a very high quality product. "It is the only straight antioxidant drink. It has strong antioxidant properties," says Corey, who himself frequently enjoys the drink. Additionally, the National Cancer Institute encourages the consumption of fruits like watermelon, blood oranges, cantaloupe, black cherries, papaya, black currant, mangos, pink grapefruit, guava, purple plum, and apricots. Recently, Corey says that a lot of people in

his spa have used and enjoyed MonaVie, a premier açai berry drink.

While some products and supplements can be very costly, Corey and Dr. Mabel state that you don't need to buy the most expensive antioxidant product to get quality results. Often times you can simply go to your local grocer or GNC store and find a product of equal value that costs less. Dr. Mabel adds that açai berry and pomegranates may be the best fruits which contain antioxidants, but you could use what fruits you have that are in season. Evaluate the products as you would with any other food and decipher marketing hype from what you could seamlessly integrate into your life. Dr. Mabel recommends that people look at the "oxygen radical absorbance capacity, or Orac content, found on the labels of what you drink, which measures the potency of antioxidant power."

When looking to increase your antioxidant intake there are a few key pointers to keep in mind. "The value of antioxidants will never change, so make a lifestyle change that works for you," says Corey. "Generally, most things are ok in moderation, but even if you are using a supplement, don't overdo it. Moderation is key." Corey also recommends supplements such as a strong multivitamin labeled as having strong antioxidant properties and containing plenty of vitamin C and E. Be it food or drink, color variation in your diet is also important. "Think rainbow," says Dr. Mabel. "The more colorful the fruits and vegetables in your diet, the more antioxidants you are ingesting. The colors protect the food from the effects of oxidation."

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Imagery provided by MonaVie & Pom Wonderful.

For more information about the benefits of antioxidants, visit the National Cancer Institute's website (<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/antioxidantsprevention>), or contact Corey or Dr. Mabel:

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